1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

619 [175] have achieved. For the traditional Santal, membership in the tribe constitutes the widest bond of social identification. This is true even though as far back as historical records extend (to the early nineteenth century), the Santal have not been politically unified. Beneath the level of the somewhat nebulous tribe there are interpenetrating territorial and kinship organizations. [634] [192] Territorially, the largest formally organized unit is the *Pargana* (Hindi = a subdivision of a district), a loose confederation of approximately a dozen villages bound together to settle certain judicial questions. Its proceedings are conducted by a "Chief" [621] (*Parganath* in Bengali or *Desh-Pradhān* in Hindi). The village (*ato*) is the only other formally organized territorial unit and is often divided into sections (*tola* in Hindi). Village "Chiefs" [622] [792] [192] are known as *Mąñjhi* or *Pradhān* (Hindi = Headman); other village officials include an "Assistant Chief" or "Chiefs" (*Jog-mąñjhi*) and a "Village Priest" (*Naeke*).

614 [192] The widest separate kinship unit is the "Clan" (*Paris:* or *Jāti*,* Hindi = Caste). According to the Santal creation myth there should be twelve clans; in fact there appear to be only nine. Clan membership, like all inheritance, is determined patrilineally. Containing thousands of members, the clan is, of course, a fictitious kinship unit; apart from bearing a name and the presumption of some common rituals performed by its constituent local lineages, the clan has few "likenesses" to bind it together and does not exist as a corporate unit. The clan is, nonetheless, an exogamous social entity which serves as a reference point establishing kinship relations among all Santal. Santal unable to trace "actual" common relatives can establish their kin relationship via the clan; for example, a non-kin of the same sex and same clan might be regarded as a brother,

* *Jāti* is also used by the Santal to refer to the tribe as a unit.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

VIII. CRIME AND ITS PUNISHMENT

a. The councils.

623 We have three kinds of councils: The village, or headman's council, the outside, or over-
634 chief council, and the hunt, or the council of the people of the country. In the village council the village headman is the president; in the outside-council the Pargana is the president, and in the hunt council the hunt-priest is the president. In the headman's council the 'five men' of the village[1] assist the headman in judging. In the Pargana's council the village headmen under the Pargana and the village people of the neighbourhood assist him in judging. In the hunt-council the people of the whole country assist the hunt-priest in judging. The headman is above the village; the Pargana is above a number of villages. There is nothing fixed; they have not the same number of villages, some have many, others have only a small number under them. We have Dęs Mąńjhis, these are the assistants of the Parganas. From a village headman's judgement they may appeal to the Pargana, and from the Pargana's judgement they may appeal to the people of the country in the burnt forest. From the judgement of the people of the country there is no appeal.

634 The customary perquisites of a Pargana are as follows: From every single village under him he is to get year by year one rupee, half-a-seer clarified butter, and eighty cobs of Indian corn. The Dęs Mąńjhi gets eight annas, a quarter seer clarified butter, and forty cobs of Indian corn every year in the same villages. When the village headmen under the Pargana pay in to him his perquisites, he gives them a feast, and the Dęs Mąńjhi also
177 does the same. Nowadays some village headmen do not give the Pargana the rupee, neither
178 does the Pargana give any feast to the village headmen who pay: they let all pass into
622 desuetude, since the Europeans have appeared in the Santal country. Since these have
634 appeared, the Parganas and the village headmen have become utterly greedy; anyone who
661 is able to give them most money, in his favour they judge, and people of this kind they help in the public courts, and poor people who have no money, they do not take any notice of; without cause or reason they scold and browbeat them and cause their suit to be dismissed.

177 The people of the country are not nice either. They do not inform the village headman,
178 neither do they complain to the Pargana, and to the people of the country they do not
691

[1] See Dictionary s. v. mōṛē hoṛ.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

wit and sometimes his force, to control the tipsy folk.

(iv) *Godet*:—He is a sort of an usher and bearer-in-general at the beck and call of the headman and his assistants, holding like them rent-free lands as the privilege of his office.

(v) *Naeke* and *Cudam Naeke*: —Added to the fore-going, the ecclesiastical functions of the tribe are exercised by the *Naeke* (village-priest) and his assistant, whose special function is to propitiate the hill-spirits.

(2) Inter-village organization:—

The rural units, on their turn, are federated into a number of larger groups, each under the supervision (as we saw in Mayurbhanj) of a Desh-Pròdhan, whose special function, we shall soon notice.

On the top of this, these federal units are co-ordinated under the superintendence of a Santal over-chief, called *Pargana* having a varying area of the country under his jurisdiction, over which according to immemorial custom, he is the supreme head.

The special function of these tribal offices will be explained in detail in course of this chapter; and it is time that we should deal with the village assembly, a wonderful relic of ancient India embedded in the Santal tribal jurisprudence, serving

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

634 692

Desh-pròdhan and his inter village council

The second court of appeal in Santal tribal law is presided over by a Desh-Pròdhan having jurisdiction over about twenty villages. The unwritten Santal procedure code requires that the president of the tribunal should be assisted by a "Mònjèn hòr" (village elders) representing the villages under him, as well as the Headman of the village from whom the case came by way of reference or from the appeal of the party aggrieved by the decision of the village court. The cases tried here on reference are generally complicated ones, as the case of an unmarried mother, the paternity of whose child the village Headman is unable to trace, and bigger social disputes about tribal customs or usage during religious or social functions. This higher tribunal sits only occasionally, being either convened by the president himself on his own initiative, or on being moved by the aggrieved party. Such a president is selected by the villages constituting his constituency, and he is irremovable till his death.[1]

[623] [622] [684]

1. As regards the reference to the *Desh-Pròdhan*, we had an interesting tug-of-war during our investigation in Mayurbhanj, when a *Pròdhan* (Headman) stoutly refused to admit that the aggrieved party himself had any right of appeal to the *Desh-Pròdhan*, maintaining that the court of appeal could only be set in motion by the Headman's reference alone. We undertook extensive inquiries but found the weight of opinion overwhelming against the claim of the Headman.

St Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

Supreme Court of the Santals

224 634 692 [196] According to immemorial custom, the Santals join together in an annual hunt (*Lò bir sendra*) on the conclusion of the spring flower-festival, when opportunity is taken to discuss various questions affecting the social and religious problems of the tribe, and to decide the reference cases from the decisions of the *Desh-Pròdhans*.

Here grave social offences necessitating social excommunication and ostracism (*Bitlibà*), (as we shall see in detail very soon) constitute subjects of grave deliberation by the tribe. Such meetings are [211] convened by the circulation of a mysterious notice [184] by means of a knot tied to a rope as in Mayurbhanj, [202] or a branch of *Sal* tree carried from *hat* (market) to *hat* (as in Santal Parganas). About the constitution [114] of this privy-council, Dr. Campbell opines that a person, *Dihri* (the superintendent of the hunt), is also the president of the court which assembles in the evening, but all that our enquiries revealed in Mayurbhanj was that the Pargana, the Desh-Pròdhans of the tribe assisted by the elders called Desh-Panchayet, jointly deliberate together before declaring their verdict.

[184] [198] This ancient institution, called in Santal lore *Sendra bir bichar* (a trial during a hunt at a forest) is almost extinct in Mayurbhanj, as wild games are protected by the State and no question of a tribal hunt

Jit Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

arises ; and those days are no more when it was a regular feature of Santal life with the mass dancing and drinking associated with its conclusion. So it is that the Santals of Mayurbhanj have got a second string to their bow, in the form of a parliament during *Sakrat baske*, (*Mòkòrbasi*, on the second of Magh) in case the hunting assembly may not be convened for want of sufficient attraction.

Supreme council at Mòkòrbasi

This parliament of the *Desh-Pròdhans* is held at some halting place (*gadi* or *mukam*) towards the river Damodar to which the Santals journey to throw the bones of their dead relations in the holy river. Here it is that the people aggrieved by the decision of the *Desh-Pròdhans* appeal to the assembly of elders to reopen their cases and try them according to law. Frequently, these appeals are admitted and tried by the assembly of all the *Desh-Pròdhans* of the tribe in consultation with the elders. But here also only important questions relating to the payment of bride-price or restriction of conjugal rights form the subject-matter of the decisions of the supreme court.

Social taboos: Punishment for their breaches

While dealing with the village assembly and its powers and functions, we have observed that as

St Mukherjee O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

At Mayurbhanj

684 184 [579] Our enquiries at Mayurbhanj revealed the existence of this institution, the only difference being that no general unrest was reported within recent memory attending the execution of the tribal punishment, so as to endanger the peace of the land.

692 623 634 684 Here also the parties adduce evidence before the *Panchayet*, and more serious cases are referred to the inter-village council and thence, if necessary, to the Supreme Court during the tribal hunt or the parliament at *Mòkòrbasi*.

684 783 [346] The special feature of the Mayurbhanj programme includes installation of a *càṇḍàl* (a temple-like structure made of *Sal* wood) in which straw or mud images of the delinquents are placed, whereas their clothes are hung outside. Then amidst music and beat of drums the ceremony of penance is performed.

Restoration to the Tribal fold

The men who are thus excommunicated are prohibited from any social intercourse with the others as dining and getting their children married. Thus harassed by the villagers, the boycotted persons sometimes leave the village to save themselves and their progeny from ignominy. The position of those who were outcasted for having sexual connexion with people of other races is the worst, for they are

S Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1942
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

224 was a regular feature in old times but now it is organised more or less for the relaxation of state guests or when a wild animal troubles the people.

Deshua Sendra (Disom Gipitic' Sendra)[1].

[634] The date of this annual hunt is fixed by the Parganas of the hilly areas where the tribal excursion is made in the month of *Chaitra* or *Baisakh* (April—May). The information is sent round by means of a knotted string called *Girà gaṭh* conveyed by the Santals.

224 202 211

The *modus operandi* of this information may be thus explained. Supposing a string with fifteen knots reaches the village X, the villagers will unloose a knot. When it reaches the village Y, it means that fourteen days remain for the hunt taking place. The messenger carrying the notice is changed there and another takes his place. It is his duty to inform the place of *Gipitic'*, e.g. where the tribe would rest after the hunt.

224 202 211 [634] [793] The preliminaries regarding which portions of the jungle would be beaten by the people of particular *monzas* (areas) being fixed by the Parganas in consultation with the tribe, the *Dihri* of the area offers pujas to the presiding deity of the hill.

[178] [579] [211] 1 This hunt has been stopped since 1916 when a melee took place in Mayurbhanj, so the information sent round by a string full of knots cannot now be legally circulated.

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1002
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

Gipitic'

224
634
628

When the hunt is finished, all the Santals assembled repair to the Gipitic', the place fixed for spending the night after the excursion is over. The Parganas sit together and decide disputes regarding the ownership of hunted games which are heaped under the shades of trees occupied by the villagers of particular localities.

Let us take up a concrete case to illustrate the rules regarding the decision of such claims. Suppose an animal was first shot by X of a village A. Thereafter, it was again shot at by the villagers of B and again by C. The judges, in such a case, would award the *mandal* (the hind part of an animal) of the right leg together with the head of the animal, the liver and lungs (*imbòrò*) to X. It is customary for the man thus allowed his first share to offer the *imbòrò* (liver and lungs) to the Chief presiding deity, Marañ Buru, and Hapramko and share the meal with the members of his clan. Should B, who had the second shot, belong to village A, he will not get any special share. But if the fact be otherwise, he will get five ribs of the right front side. Similarly, C will not be allowed a share should he be an inhabitant of A but will receive the meat measuring three fingers of the entire neck of the hunted animal. The Parganas, who decide these cases have a special knack of identifying the man by whose arrow the animal was

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

224
634
628

shot. They also take evidence as regards the first, second and third shots.

The rest of the meat is taken by the villagers of the man who had the first shot and shared among themselves. It is worthy of note that even the hunting dogs employed in the chase receive their shares equally with men. Generally, the meat that goes to X's share is carried by his villagers home. The head of the game shot is divided into two parts, the first going to X, the other to the villagers of X. The Headman of X's village gets the left hind leg (*donde*). This is also conveyed home by the villagers, who, in return, receive a pot of rice-beer, twelve seers of rice, five pieces of turmeric and some salt. It is customary for the men thus presented to cook a hotch-poteh with the head of the hunted animal previously received for a common meal. [231]

In case an animal like a *Gayal* or *Sambar* (a species of deer like an elk) is hunted by, say ten or twelve men, custom lays it down that the first five hunters will only receive their shares.

It should be noted that if X's wife is pregnant, he will not get the head of the animal and it will go to the villagers to be shared by them. The *Dihri* gets a share of meat per each mouza of men who hunted the animals. [843] [793]

224
782

Another important feature deserves mention. It may be that in a *Deshua Sendra* there may be any

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956

AW42 Santal AW42

[Introductory, P. xii]

SANTAL PARGANAS

102
103
114
131
361
491
496
• 634

N. B. Scale: one inch = 13.5 Miles.

1 [i.e. on original page. - Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

[P.1]

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Santal Parganas is a district within Bhagalpur Division in Bihar, lying between 23° 40′ and 25° 18′ North latitude and between 86° 28′ and 87° 57′ East longitude. It is bounded on the north by the districts of Bhagalpur and Purnea, on the east by Malda, Murshidabad and Birbhum ; on the south by Burdwan and Manbhum ; and on the west by Hazaribagh, Monghyr and Bhagalpur. The principal range in the district is that of the Rajmahal Hills. They consist of a succession of hills, plateaus, valleys and ravines, the general elevation of which varies from 500 to 800 feet above sea level. A large portion of the range is included in the Daminikoh (the skirt of the hills). In the Santal parganas within the four subdivisions Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal, the Santals live in largest numbers. They live in Damin areas, where previously one could not enter without the permission of the Commissioner. The Santal living on the very tract of the Aryan overflooding Northern India (in fact very near the sacred triangular spot between Benares, Rajgir and Gaya which witnessed the phenomenal Upanishadic speculation of the days of Janak and the rise of Jainism and Buddhism) could not but have been influenced by these and in their turn must have considerably left their mark on the folk culture of Northern India. If there is any culture which still carries the impress of the underlying philosophic speculation and order of thought that was wide spread in India prior to the rise of the Dravidian culture, it was very likely the belief and

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

178
175
648
669
[634] The Governor understanding the mistake of his predecessors tried to appease the Santal by removing the genuine grievances. He made the Santal territory a separate district called Daminikoh, with four sub-districts, Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal. The charge of these sub-districts were given to a Deputy Commissioner and four assistant Commissioners. The [625] regular police was abolished and the duty of keeping [622] peace and order and of arresting of criminals was vested in the hands of the parganait and the village headman.

In the social sphere also steps were taken to ameliorate the condition of the oppressed Santals. The [426] money lenders were not permitted to extort their debts over and over again by recourse to trickery or other- [804] wise. False weights and measures were corrected and cheating in this department was punished and the Santals could now sell their produce in the market witout fear of being swindled. The abolition of serf- [566] dom and the new relationship between capital and [466] labour were far reaching reforms, and the Santal could earn his living as a free worker on the Railway instead of being a slave of a powerful protector. Again, the [464] beginning of tea plantations about this time gave a fresh impetus to profitable work and a higher economic level was achieved by the Santal, who further decided to migrate to the tea area, and on the expiry of the contract to return with a tidy some of money. Such a diverting of labour caused an easing in the struggle for existence among those who stayed at home and enabled the migrant to earn enough to establish himself securely for life.

Thus out of the rebellion came some lasting good and the Santals in the end benefited from it.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Federal Officers (Parganait) and Assistant Federal Officer (Deshmanjhi)

634 •

A *Parganait* is an officer who is in charge of several villages collectively known as *bunglow*. (For administrative purposes several villages are grouped together in what is now known as a *bunglow*). The number of villages contained within each vary in every case. The place where I worked, the Sundarpahari *bunglow*, within Godda sub-division, consisted of the following 28 villages.

634
103
[114]

Villages of Sundarpahari Bunglow

1.	Tetria	15.	Jitpur.
2.	Domdi	16.	Bara Kalajuri.
3.	Kusumghati	17.	Chota Kalajuri.
4.	Tilabad.	18.	Gamaroe.
5.	Amjora.	19.	Gamarbera.
6.	Jisubathan.	20.	Dahubera.
7.	Bara Kalajore.	21.	Telbitha.
8.	Chota Kalajore.	22.	Jamalpur.
9.	Mohompur.	23.	Jiapuri.
10.	Sundarpahari.	24	Ladhapathor.
11.	Saloli	25.	Phulberia.
12.	Salpathera.	26	Manibathan.
13.	Paharpur.	27.	Dhapahari.
14.	Rampur.	28.	Zolo

As a *Manjhi* has an assistant so the *Parganait* also has one known as *Desh-Manjhi*. There are also *Chakidars* who are appointed by the *Parganait* who act as the messengers of the two above officers. Outside the Damin area there is no *Parganait* and *sardars* are appointed by the Sub-divisional officer having a number of *chowkidars* under him.

634

631

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

622
634 Custom has made these positions hereditary and
666 there is a formal election system. The eldest member in each house of the village has a vote. After election the headman's appointment is confirmed by the Sub-divisional officer and the Deputy Commissioner of that Division, and the *Desh Manjhi's* appointment is confirmed by the Sub-divisional Officer only.

221 **Federal Council and The First Court of Appeal**
622 **The Panchayat and Kulidrup**
624 In the month of Magh (January and February) the village people gather together after a sacrifice. The headman of the village, taking the lead, resigns his post to the village people; all the other officials of the village also resign their posts one after another

634 **Panchayat**: In each *bunglow* there are two councils, upper and lower, like the modern Council House and Assembly of India. The upper is known as *Panchayat* in which the *Parganait* of the *bunglow* presides and the headman of all the villages of the *bunglow* become members of the *Panchayat*. Affairs of a weighty nature have to be decided in the council.

623 **Kulidrup**: The lower assembly is known as *Kulidrup*
634 in which the eldest member of each house represents the assembly and the headman of the village presides. The indigenous officials of the village described above are ex-officio members of the *Kulidrup* and every village has a place for holding the council before the house of the headman of the village which is known as *Manjhisthan*. All petty disputes, both of a civil and

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

623
634 •
[627]

All petty disputes, both of a civil and criminal nature, are settled there but if the matter to be settled is of an immoral and shameful character, they go to the end of the village street or on some other convenient place where they need not fear to hurt the feelings of their womenkind.

428

Inheritance: In the matter of inheritance, the Santals follow their own customs and know nothing of the so-called codes which govern the devolution of property among the Hindus. Till the death of the father the property of the family remains intact and all the members enjoy in common. After his death the property is divided among his sons equally except that the eldest gets a bullock and a rupee more than the others. As the Santal women have no right to any of the property, movable and immovable, the question of inheritance on their part cannot arise at all. If a man dies without an issue his property goes to the nearest relation. If the father of the deceased remains alive the property will revert to the father; if he is dead it goes to the brothers of the deceased equally; if the latter are dead their sons succeed. In default of this the paternal uncles and their sons become successors. The condition of the widow of a childless man becomes very bad; none takes her charge. Sometimes she gets one cloth, a bati (brass vessel), a calf and 10 to 12 maunds of paddy. Sometimes also it can be seen that her husband's younger brothers keep her. Even when one of the younger brothers keeps her, the share of the deceased brother is equally divided between all the brothers. If the younger brothers of her husband do not give her any shelter she returns to her parents'

[562]

428
768

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

[facing p. 219]

142
291
516
634

Parganait
MR. SAKRAM HEMBROM
and his family (*Christian*)

142
291
634

Assistant to the Parganait
DESH-MANJHI
(*Christian*)

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

The organization which binds groups of villages together is loose by comparison with the village system. The Santals distinguish between the various sections of the country in which their villages are situated, calling them *parganas*. Each *pargana* has a distinctive name, which may be either the name of a village situated within its borders or a general name. Over each of the *parganas* a *parganath* is supposed to have jurisdiction. McAlpin's report, the result of an inquiry instituted by the Bengal Government which led to the Tenancy Amendment Act of 1918, in addition to its main purpose of suggesting measures for the protection of Santal lands, dealt also with the condition of the Santal village system. McAlpin reported that the *pargana* system was far gone in decay, and it is not possible to question his conclusion. Binu Hāsdāk' of Tantidanga, late *parganath* of the Sarenga area, was typical of his class. His mind was well stored with the customary law of the tribe, and from time to time he was called in by nearby villages to help more particularly with disputes arising out of marriage tangles. He was personally popular and had some prestige as the possessor of valuable remedies against sickness, but on his own confession his authority was of a very limited kind. "What can I do", he once said, "unless the people of the village are agreed?" There is the crux of the situation; in the village, public opinion is a wellnigh irresistible force. Binu used, nevertheless, to go happily about his errands, for among other advantages which accrued he received a fee amounting to one rupee four annas when a guilty party was fined.

Kinship ties share with the well-knit village system the governance of the Santal's daily life, regulating his relationships with his fellows. The tribe is divided into clans, and each clan is again divided into sub-clans. The clan descends through the father, and when girls marry they are taken into the clans of their husbands. The clans have a totemistic basis and they are exogamous. Land is conceived of as belonging to the clan. Although individual and family ownership is now the rule, Santals will not countenance the transfer of land from one clan to another. The one exception for which allowance is made has been forced on them by economic necessity; it occurs in the case of a man without sons who brings his daughter's husband into his own house to carry on the cultivation, the son-in-law thereby acquiring rights in the property for descendants. The rights conferred by Hindu personal law on daughters in the property of their fathers or on wives in the property of their

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

273 It would be a mistake to suggest that the attitude of the Santal towards intoxicants is one of simple approval. There are two standards at work. There is, on the one hand, the almost universal acceptance of the habit, reinforced by its sanction in mythology, the social function that it does fulfil and the fact that it is a form of food. There is also, on the other hand, a recognition somewhat grudgingly given to the undesirable consequences of the habit. It leads to a loss of working days, to [178] quarrels and offences against the moral code. Most informants agree that the drinking habit has increased in recent years. Such a statement must be regarded with the suspicion appropriate to all attempts to glorify the good old days. It does, however, imply the existence of a critical attitude. The earliest records, which indicate conditions a hundred years ago, all mention the drinking habits of the Santal as phenomenal. It is probable that the drinking of spirits in preference to beer has grown during the time when the Santals have been drawn more completely into a money economy, and it is certain that the Congress boycott in 1930 gave more than a temporary impetus to illicit distilling. Nevertheless, there is further evidence of [522] moral judgments being applied to drinking. The habitual [558] drunkard is a figure of fun and regarded with contempt. The drinking of rice beer does not lead to much intoxication except during festivals. A woman who drinks to excess is considered to be loose in other respects as well. People frequently complain that whereas formerly only the old men and women used to drink, now everyone does so. It would be easy, however, to overdo the picture of a Santal conscience in these matters, for they are a pleasure-loving people and drink is associated with their pleasures. The common attitude was well expressed by an old woman who had been asked to sing when she replied: "I cannot sing without beer."

221 The annual hunt takes place during the hot season. This 224 institution is still vigorous wherever there are Santals living [462] within reach of a forest. Hunting is regarded as the characteristic activity of the male. When the date of a hunt has to be • [634] fixed, the responsibility for the arrangements and for making it known through the area rests with the *parganath*. The date may be fixed in different ways; each *pargana* follows its own 221 tradition. In three adjoining localities, the following three 224 traditions are observed. In one the hunt is held always on the 184 seventh day of the month of *Baisakh* (April-May). In the second it is held on the day of the full moon in the same month.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

797
798
797
634

approval of much in the Christian message is perhaps due to the fact that Santal society is not sufficiently aware of danger. In the area, very few conversions of village officials have taken place. During the first decade of the present century a *parganath* with his family became Christian, and the reports of the time speak of hoping that his example would be followed by many others. In fact the Church has made practically no progress in that *pargana* since; a brother of the convert became *parganath* in his place. In a more recent example which occured in 1940 in the Midnapore district, a baptized *parganath* retained his office, but his example in becoming Christian was not followed. The only cases of village headman and village priest accepting Baptism have occurred in one village where the mission had become landlord. The large majority of converts have come from the rank and file of Santal society.

159
797

Individual religious experience plays a comparatively insignificant part in the first approach of the Santal to the Christian faith, though it is a strong motive in isolated cases. Dosoroth Hāsdāk', baptized in 1916 at about the age of thirty-five, was such a case. During the years when the mission was in its infancy he was growing up in a small village eighteen miles from Sarenga. He was sent to a village school by his father, and his first knowledge of Christianity was gained when he sat for the final examination, and this knowledge supplied him with a faith at a later crisis in his life to take the place of his former belief in the spirits. Here are his own words: "From that time (when he had gone to sit for an examination) I used to question in my mind the customs of the Santals. For a long time I went on drinking and dancing and I used to reverence the spirits in tree stumps, stones and trees, but all the time with growing dissatisfaction. As my sins increased, the Heavenly Father led me into more and more temptation and trouble. Two boys and two girls died at childbirth, and believing only in the spirits I ran to all the *ojhas* round about, but none could do anything. Then my wife and I talked together and decided that as the spirits had never been able to do anything we would no longer heed them but depend on God alone. So we tried to learn more about Him, and after awhile we heard of the mission at Sarenga. I went there a few times and got understanding; then I was baptized when Spencer Sahib paid his first visit to Samadi. From that time, believing in the One God and by His mercy, all my children and all of us have remained well."[1] Dosoroth died in 1940, being

(127)

[1] Quoted from a MS. in my possession written by Dosoroth at my request.